Spring 2020

Gifts of Gold: Japanese Lacquer Brochure

Fairfield University Art Museum

Gifts of Gold

The Art of Japanese Lacquer Boxes

January 17 - May 15, 2020

FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM

Bellarmine Hall Galleries

We are so pleased to present *Gifts of Gold: The Art of Japanese Lacquer Boxes* this semester in the museum's Bellarmine Hall Galleries. This exhibition introduces viewers to the functions, decorative techniques, and symbolic associations of Japanese lacquer through select works from the 15th through 21st centuries.

While many lacquerwares are left plain to showcase a glossy black or red finish, achieved after many layers of lacquer application, the art reached heights of decorative potential in Japan with techniques of "sprinkled picture" (*maki-e*) decoration using small particles of gold and other metals in abstract and pictorial designs. Rich with seasonal, poetic, and literary allusions, lacquerwares stand in conversation with other arts, such as textile design, ceramics, and paintings.

We are extremely grateful to Erik and Cornelia Thomsen who have so generously lent a number of the works in this exhibition from their private collection, as well as for helping to arrange loans from other private collections. We would also like to thank Ive Covaci, PhD (Adjunct Professor of Art History) for curating this exhibition, and for sharing her vast expertise of Japanese art with us.

Thanks and appreciation as always go to our exceptional museum team for their hard work in bringing this exhibition to fruition: Michelle DiMarzo, Curator of Education and Academic Engagement; Emily McKeon, Museum Assistant; and Megan Paqua, Registrar. We are also grateful for the additional support provided across the University by Edmund Ross, Susan Cipollaro, and Tess Brown Long.

Carey Mack Weber
Frank and Clara Meditz Executive Director

Cat. 8

The Materials and Production of Lacquer Arts

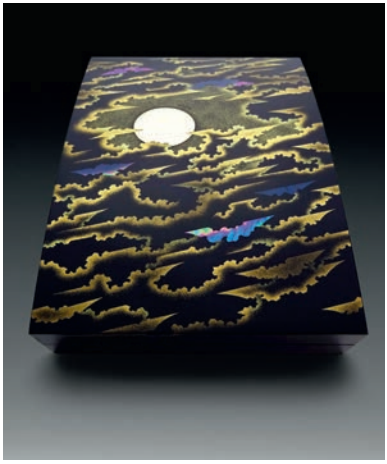
Archeological finds of wood and pottery objects coated with lacquer date back to the Neolithic eras in East Asia, specifically the early Jōmon period (10,000- 300 BCE) in Japan. Derived from the resin of the lacquer tree (*toxicodendron vernicifluum*), lacquer creates a hard, durable, and waterproof surface when applied to an object and allowed to cure. Chinese elite tombs from the Warring States period (475-221 BCE) onward often contained large numbers of lacquered vessels and accessories decorated with designs in black and vermilion red lacquer. These colors also characterize many Japanese lacquerwares, in part due to Chinese cultural influence. Lacquer has myriad applications beyond coating vessels; it was used in sculpture, to adorn architectural elements, as a painting medium, and in the repair of broken ceramics. In the 8th century, Japanese artisans began sprinkling gold powders and small metallic flakes onto wet lacquer, in a unique technique known as *maki-e* ("sprinkled picture"). This technique has been used to decorate sumptuous lacquerwares produced in Japan up through the present day.

Fig. 1 Utagawa Hiroshige III (Japanese, 1842-1894), *Harvesting Lacquer in Mikawa Province* from the series *Dai Nippon Bussan Zue (Products of Greater Japan)*, 1877, color woodblock print. Image courtesy The Lavenberg Collection of Japanese Prints

True lacquer, called *urushi*, is sourced only from the lacquer trees native to East Asia, tapped for their sap from April through October via horizontal incisions (Fig. 1). The raw lacquer, which naturally ages to a deep brown color, is processed and refined into various grades. It can be filtered to remove impurities, heated to remove excess water, and combined with coloring agents such as cinnabar for red, and carbon or iron for black. Coarser lacquer is applied as preparatory layers on a wooden object, designed to fill in slight texture variations and create a smooth surface, achieved by meticulous polishing. Between each thinly applied layer, the object must cure in special humidifying chambers, called *furo* ("baths"). Lacquer hardens through polymerization, not drying, so the medium is akin to modern plastics; unsurprisingly, industrial plastic imitating the appearance of lacquer is commonly used for utensils and tableware today. After this time- and labor-intensive process, the highest-grade jet-black lacquer forms the final layers on objects destined for gold *maki-e* decoration.

A finished lacquer box has therefore passed through many hands, even beyond those who grow, harvest, mine, or process the raw materials. Specialized woodcarvers, turners, and joiners prepare the wood object – sometimes so thin as to be transparent – which must dry completely to prevent cracking. Various lacquerers apply the base and finishing layers, before passing the object to *maki-e* artists, who may even work from designs prepared by another specialist. All parts of this process are key to the quality of the finished product, even as the *maki-e* decorators and designers maintain the highest status and often sign the finished works.

The lacquer industry has played an important economic role in Japanese history. As early as the 8th century, new government codes created a Bureau of Lacquer under the Ministry of Finance. In the pre-modern period, lacquer workshops supplied utensils to the imperial court in Kyoto and ritual furnishings to temples and shrines, while also decorating the architecture of official buildings and aristocratic residences. Precious *maki-e* lacquers destined for elite warrior patrons flourished during the 16th and early 17th centuries, an era of sustained military conflicts within Japan, but also one of widespread international contact with the rest of Asia and Europe. During this time, Japanese lacquer was exported via Portuguese and Dutch merchants, capturing the interest of European audiences, and resulting in the production of specialized export ware incorporating Western forms and iconography. In Europe, just as "china" became shorthand for porcelain tableware, "japan" and "japanning" referred to lacquer and its imitations. During the early modern Edo period (1615-1868), family-based workshops supplied sumptuous lacquer sets for the families of the Tokyo-based shoguns as well as regional feudal lords, as centuries of peace and relative isolation saw competition via aesthetic display rather than military power. Japan's opening to international trade and rapid industrialization after 1854 disrupted the traditional family-based craft system, but foreign demand was renewed by lacquerwares representing Japanese arts and crafts at worldwide



Cat. 11

expositions; likewise, urbanization and economic developments within Japan created new domestic markets in the 20th century.

Many of today's lacquer artists have inherited generations-old workshops, tracing their origins to Edo-period lacquer-producing families or regions; others come to the profession through training in art schools. Contemporary lacquer artists, such as Yoshio Okada (Cats. 10 and 11), use *maki-e* techniques to reinterpret traditional motifs and forms, finding new expressions in an age-old medium.

Styles and Motifs in Lacquer Decoration

Popular motifs throughout the history of Japanese lacquer decoration include seasonal plants, auspicious animals, and designs inspired by literature and poetry. Often named after the locations, families, or artists associated with their origin, specific styles of lacquer decoration respond to, and in turn influence, developments in painting, ceramics, and textile design.

Cat. 1

Cat. 2

Black and red Negoro-ware lacquers are associated with Negoroji temple, near Osaka, where workshops produced these unadorned utilitarian wares beginning in the 13th century. Originally made by and for the temple community, Negoro lacquers were also appreciated by nobility and tea connoisseurs for their understated elegance of simple forms accentuated by black and red surfaces. As on the *Nobleman's Meal Table (Kakeban)* (Cat. 1), the final coat of vermilion red lacquer was often allowed to wear through. Such signs of age and use were greatly desired in keeping with aesthetic concepts of *wabi* and *sabi* that value imperfection, transience, rusticity, and austerity. Similar aesthetics pervaded other arts, such as ceramics, garden design, and architecture.

In contrast, Kōdaiji-style lacquers represent the golden opulence and decorative flourishes of *maki-e* in the 16th and 17th centuries. A 17th century *Trousseau Box* (Cat. 8), likely part of a bridal set, is distinguished by its seasonal motifs arrayed on contrasting fields of black and pear-skin (*nashiji*) ground, divided by a zig-zag pattern. This abstract method of dividing motifs was derived from textile designs of earlier periods, showing the frequent and fertile influences between these arts. Kōdaiji, a mortuary temple patronized by the widow of the powerful warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598), was filled with lacquer architectural elements decorated in this style, using primarily autumnal motifs. Widely emulated by workshops in Kyoto, Kōdaiji-style lacquers often used the reddish-gold pear-skin technique not just for the ground, but for pictorial effects, such as leaves of trees or flowers. A tea caddy by Tada Chuun (Cat. 5) demonstrates the modern application of this technique in depicting bamboo.

Cat. 5

Cat. 14

Arising in the 17th century, the Rinpa style is characterized by frequent collaborations between painters, textile designers, ceramicists, and lacquer artists. The style takes its name from the artist Ogata Kōrin (1658-1716), an important later proponent of the style, and features revivals of themes from classical literature and stylized depictions of motifs from nature. The *Writing Box with Horse and Rider* (Cat. 14) demonstrates several Rinpa design principles: bold areas of contrasting color, simplified motifs, focus on poetic content, and use of innovative lacquer techniques, such as large inlays of pewter and mother-of-pearl used for contour lines and faces. Woodblock-printed manuals disseminated Rinpa designs, which were widely copied in the Edo period and continue to be popular in contemporary lacquers today.

Lacquer and the Tea Ceremony

The Japanese tea ceremony, the ritualized preparation and serving of whisked green matcha, is often associated with the country's varied ceramic traditions that supply tea bowls, tea caddies, and water jars collected by connoisseurs and practitioners. But lacquer objects, particularly caddies for containing the powdered green tea, are a key part of many tea ceremony assemblies. Formal tea ceremonies also involve meals served on tables such as the Negoro-ware table discussed above, and sweets served on lacquer trays to accompany and complement the bitter tea; lacquer incense boxes were frequently displayed in the alcove of the tea room along with a selected work of calligraphy or painting.

In practice, the tea caddy is one of the most important utensils in the ceremony. It is on display and handled throughout the ceremony, and the caddy (along with its silk bag and inscribed wood storage box) is closely examined by guests during viewings after the ceremony proper. Called *natsume* for their resemblance to the jujube fruit, lacquer caddies are created in several standard heights beginning in the 16th century. In this period, the tea ceremony evolved from an elite social ritual displaying treasured Chinese ceramics to one that incorporated native Japanese objects and tastes. One of the key tastemakers in this process, Sen no Rikyū (1522-1591), left records indicating that he often chose plain, black lacquer tea caddies in his assemblies. Such caddies are called "Rikyū-style" even today. The green color of the tea powder contrasts beautifully with monochrome lacquered interiors of many caddies.

Cat. 6

Cat. 9

Portable containers for tea utensils, called *chabako* or "tea boxes" (Cat. 9), were likewise often made of lacquer. A box with a motif called "snow, moon, and flower" contains a tea caddy and a lacquer holder for the bamboo whisk with a similar design. The design bridges multiple seasons: autumn represented by the moon, spring by cherry blossoms, and winter by snow, which is evoked literally by the character for snow (*yuki*) written in the center, and by the flowers scattering like snow over the rest of the box. The combination also has poetic resonance; traced back to a verse by the 9th century Chinese poet Bo Juyi (*When I see the snow, moon, or flower, I think of you*), the motif was frequently reinterpreted in Japanese poetry and visual arts.

Writing Boxes and Calligraphy

Holding the implements necessary for calligraphy, writing boxes provide some of the most beautiful examples of lacquer art and decoration. Their Japanese name, *suzuribako,* means "inkstone box," an inkstone being the abrasive surface used to grind the inkstick and mix it with water in preparation for writing. Whereas Chinese scholars preferred to keep their brushes and inkstones displayed on a desk, and therefore

Cat. 4

did not require containers, writing boxes appeared in Japan in the 10th century and held brushes, knives for cutting paper, water droppers, and ink sticks within their cases. Later in the Edo period, writing boxes were made in sets with small lacquered writing desks or larger boxes for holding papers and documents. As with other types of lacquerware, such sets formed important parts of an upper-class bride's dowry.

It is not surprising that boxes used to store the tools of literary production would often also reference the literary arts in their decoration. For the educated viewer, the Rinpa-style writing box with a courtier on horseback discussed above would instantly evoke a famous verse by the poet Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241) on the topic of a traveler finding no shelter on a snowy evening. Other boxes display calligraphic writing as a motif, or playfully incorporate literary media such as books, scrolls, or poem cards into their decoration.

Literary Landscapes

A theme that epitomizes connections between literature, landscape, and the visual arts is the "Eight Views of Ōmi Province" (*Ōmi hakkei*). Originating in China, "Eight Views" first referred to a set of "Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers," a trope in poetry and ink landscape painting of the 11th century. With individual titles such as "Autumn Moon over Lake Dongting" and "Geese Alighting on a Sandy Shore," such paintings sought to capture atmospheric effects and poetic resonances of the titles, rather than representing actual features of the landscape. Chinese paintings of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers entered Japanese shogunal collections in the 14th century, during a period of increased contact with the continent and fashion for things Chinese. Japanese painters copied and reiterated these Chinese themes and landscapes in their own works, sometimes combining all the views into a single composition.

Beginning in the 16th century, Japanese poets and painters transposed the eight Chinese views onto the Japanese landscape around Ōmi province and Lake Biwa, a large lake just east of Kyoto in present-day Shiga prefecture. This

Cat. 13

Cat. 13 (detail of interior lid)

area already had a long poetic and visual tradition, with poetry inspired by Ōmi appearing in anthologies as early as the 8th century. Artists working in the 16th century were therefore merging several ancient themes, both Chinese and native, into a new, codified set of views. Evoking a mood similar to the Chinese originals, the Ōmi views reference them explicitly in their poetic titles: Evening Snow at Mt. Hira; Descending Geese at Katada; Night Rain at Karasaki; Evening Bell at Mii Temple; Sunset Glow at Seta River; Clearing Storm at Awazu; Returning Sails at Yabase; Autumn Moon at Ishiyama Temple.

A 19th century lacquer writing box in the collection of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center (Cat. 13) combines all eight views of Ōmi and their standard landmarks into a unified composition across the cover and interior of the lid. Rendered in gold *maki-e* with varying levels of relief, the famous features of the landscape – Seta Bridge, the pines at Karasaki, Mt. Hira – stand in for the canonical poems that traditionally accompany these views. For example, the poem accompanying the view, "Night Rain at Karasaki," reads:

> *Silent for the song of a chorus of raindrops falling in the night*
> *the Karasaki Pine defies the wind and firmly stands its ground.*
> (Trans. Riley Soles)

This view appears on the left center of the interior lid, and features the famous old pine, a small shrine, and diagonal lines indicating wind-driven rain. The predominantly black background of the composition, with sparsely scattered soft golden clouds, sets an evening mood for the entire lacquer box, likewise resonating with the majority of the Ōmi view titles.

On the outside of the lid, the view "Autumn Moon at Ishiyama Temple" occupies a particularly prominent position in the center left. Following standard depictions of this site, which loom large in the literary and visual imagination of Ōmi province, it includes the main temple hall built upon a hillside, the famous rock formations of the temple's environs, the pagoda and moon-viewing pavilion, and the riverside gate with guardian statues, shown near the bridge in the lower section of this detail. An inlaid full moon appears above the temple, and the cloud-covered lake surrounds the site, leading into the other views. A woodblock print by Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858), from a series of *Eight Views of Ōmi* dated to 1834-35, shows the same view in a similar composition (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 Utagawa Hiroshige (Japanese, 1797–1858), *Autumn Full Moon at Ishiyama Temple (Ishiyama shūgetsu)*, from the series *Eight Views of Ōmi Province (Ōmi hakkei)*, 1834–35, polychrome woodblock print. Image: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (CC-0)

The accompanying poem appears in the square cartouche in the top right of the print:

From Ishiyama, the tremulous glow of the moon cast on Nionoumi
can be no other than the light that fell on Akashi and Suma.
(Trans. Riley Soles)

The poem's mention of the place-names Akashi and Suma opens yet another literary window: these refer to key chapters in the *Tale of Genji*, the famous early-11th-century epic court romance. According to legend, its author, the court lady Murasaki Shikibu, conceived the idea for these core chapters of the tale while on pilgrimage to Ishiyama, inspired by the sight of the full moon on Lake Biwa. In fact, the "Eight Views of Ōmi," and Ishiyama in particular, have such a close association with the *Tale of Genji* that lacquered storage containers for the book's many volumes were sometimes decorated with these motifs.

The *Tale of Genji*

Scenes and motifs from the *Tale of Genji* itself were immensely popular in paintings, lacquerwares and other arts of the Edo period. The cover of a writing box (Cat. 15) shows a scene from the 14th chapter of the tale, set at the pine-covered shore of Sumiyoshi Shrine in present-day Osaka; in contrast, the interior of the lid depicts a Chinese-style landscape, evoking monochrome ink paintings of Chinese scenes. Such pairings of Chinese and Japanese styles, forms, and iconography was a common aesthetic device in both visual and literary arts.

Cat. 15

In this episode, Prince Genji has come to the shrine to thank the gods for his renewed good fortune after a period of exile. In the background, women riding in a boat represent Genji's lover, the Akashi lady, who coincidentally arrives for a pilgrimage on the same day. Not daring to approach Genji, embarrassed at not having known about his visit and acutely aware of their difference in social status, she observes his grand party from afar. The opulence of Genji's entourage is represented in lacquer decoration by rich use of gold for the figural motifs, gold on gold decoration on the courtier's robes, and reddish-gold pear-skin ground for the setting. Prince Genji and the Akashi lady do not meet in this chapter, but rather exchange poems via messengers. This exchange is perhaps represented by the courtier in the center bearing a tray, likely made of lacquer, heading toward the cart in which Genji's presence is assumed.

In fact, the poetry contained in the *Tale of Genji* became shorthand for the chapters themselves, and standard, abbreviated pictorial compositions could serve as mnemonic devices for the chapter titles and the poems therein. These

Cat. 17

Cat. 17 (detail)

were frequently depicted on poem cards (*shikishi*), small, stiff, square papers for writing or painting. Such cards come decorated with colors and patterns, often created by sprinkling gold powders or tiny cut-gold and silver squares, in a technique that echoes *maki-e* lacquer decoration.

A collection of Genji poem cards forms the composition of a medicine container (*inrō*) (Cat. 17), an accessory worn suspended from men's dress in the Edo period. Each square contains an iconic scene and a title cartouche from the *Tale of Genji*; one of the cards is even depicted rolling up at the corner, playfully emphasizing its represented materiality. Actual poem cards could be pasted onto larger formats, such as screens, creating a collage effect. The beautiful papers themselves, rather than their narrative content, was another popular motif for lacquer boxes (Cat. 19).

Cat. 19

Fans Afloat

Like poem cards, folding fans decorated with pictorial scenes were also pasted onto screens or in albums, and soon became a stand-alone motif. Their distinctive arched shape, which could be contrasted with fans depicted closed, allowed artists to play with ideas of pattern, surface, medium, and ground. A tea caddy by Maehata Gahō (Cat. 23) displays the so-called "floating fans" motif. This combination of water and decorated fans is traced to a legendary event in which a wind-swept fan, belonging to a member of a shogunal procession, accidentally floated away upon a river; everyone in the procession found this so beautiful that they, too, cast their fans upon the stream. In this tea caddy, the stream has become a stylized golden current winding across the surface of the caddy, while the fans display distinct floral motifs in *maki-e* and inlay decoration. The artist of this caddy, the eighth head of his family's studio, has extensive experience copying old lacquerwares by Rinpa-school masters; having internalized this visual vocabulary, he deploys it in designs of his own invention.

Cat. 23

Gifts of Gold

Folding fans, whether decorated with poetry or pictures, were popular gifts at the New Year, traditionally one of the most important times of celebration in Japanese culture. Lacquerwares decorated with fan motifs (Cat. 22, back cover), therefore, made doubly appropriate and luxurious New Year's presents. Other occasions warranted gifts of lacquer as well – whether for diplomatic offerings, imperial rites, or weddings. Large sets of lacquers were required for the dowries of daughters of regional feudal lords during the Edo period, yet simultaneously restricted by sumptuary codes for the rest of the population. The fact that some ancient lacquers show very little signs of wear indicate that many such objects were treasured heirlooms through generations, rather than being in continual use for their intended functions.

When not in use or on display, lacquer objects are wrapped in protective silk bags and placed within plain-wood storage boxes, some even nested within additional black-lacquered outer boxes. The accompanying storage boxes often display written inscriptions documenting the object's maker, subject, and provenance.

Maki-e lacquer boxes are created with the utmost craftsmanship, to exacting standards, in a time-consuming process using luxury materials of gold, precious metals, and inlays. Whether evoking timeless classical motifs, seasonal plants, or incorporating an innovative new design, they speak to the patron's cultural literacy and good taste, signaling the wealth and status of giver and receiver alike. Even as patronage and ownership patterns changed through time, *maki-e* lacquerwares, as gifts of gold sharing a common visual vocabulary with other esteemed arts, carry wishes of felicity, longevity, and good fortune.

Japanese Historical Periods

Jōmon (10,000-300 BCE)
Yayoi (300 BCE-300 CE)
Kofun (300-538)
Asuka (538-710)
Nara (710-794)
Heian (794-1185)
Kamakura (1185-1333)
Muromachi (1333-1568)
Momoyama (1568-1600)
Edo (1615-1868)
Meiji (1868-1912)
Taishō (1912-1926)
Shōwa (1926-1989)
Heisei (1989-2019)
Reiwa (2019-present)

Lacquer Decoration Techniques

***maki-e* 蒔絵** ("sprinkled picture"): A general term for a set of lacquer decoration techniques achieved by sprinkling fine metal powders, often through a tube with a screen, onto wet lacquer to create a design. Three main techniques are below.

> ***hiramaki-e* 平蒔絵** ("flat sprinkled picture"): Designs are painted in wet lacquer onto the surface, then tiny metallic particles are sprinkled on, which adhere to the lacquer. When dry, the design is covered with transparent lacquer and polished. Despite the name "flat," *hiramaki-e* designs are ever so slightly raised from the surface.
>
> ***takamaki-e* 高蒔絵** ("raised sprinkled picture"): Designs are created in low relief by building up layers of lacquer, often mixed with fine clay or other materials, upon which the metal powders are sprinkled.
>
> ***togidashi maki-e* 研出蒔絵** ("burnished down sprinkled picture"): Designs are painted with lacquer on the prepared object, then metal powders are sprinkled on. Then the entire surface is covered with black lacquer, covering the metals. When hardened, the object is burnished to reveal the design from within, creating a completely smooth surface. This is the most time consuming and technically difficult of the *maki-e* techniques.

***kirikane* 切金** ("cut gold"): Thin gold leaf cut into tiny shapes (usually squares or triangles) and applied to the wet lacquer.

***nashiji* 梨地** ("pear-skin"): A term for the red-hued ground created by applying tinted lacquer and sprinkling irregularly shaped fine gold particles, covered with transparent lacquer. So-called because it mimics the skin of Asian pear (*nashi*). When used in design elements rather than ground, for example to depict flower petals or leaves, it is called "pictorial pear-skin" (*e-nashiji)*.

***raden* 螺鈿**: Use of mother of pearl (shell) for decoration, either inlaid or thinly applied onto the lacquer.

***roiiro* 蝋色**: High-quality black lacquer applied in multiple finishing layers, each layer polished before the next is applied, resulting in a very glossy black finish.

***zōgan* 象嵌**: The technique of inlaying different material (metal, shell, ceramic) into the lacquer for texture.

Further Reading

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Exhibition Checklist

1. **Unknown Japanese**
Nobleman's Meal Table (Kakeban), ca. 14th-15th century
Muromachi era (1333-1568)
Red and black lacquer on wood (Negoro ware)
6 9/16 x 12 13/16 x 12 1/4 inches (16.6 x 32.5 x 31.1 cm)
Yale University Art Gallery; Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., Class of 1913, Fund 2002.88.1

2. **Unknown Japanese**
Negoro Natsume Tea Caddy, 19th century
Edo period (1615-1868)
Red and black lacquer on wood
3 1/4 x 3 1/4 x 3 1/4 inches (8 x 7.8 x 7.8 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

3. **Suzuki Mutsumi 鈴木睦美** (1942-2009)
Sparrow Tea Caddy, 1980s
Shōwa era (1926-1989)
2 1/4 x 3 1/4 x 3 1/4 inches (6.1 x 8.4 x 8.4 cm)
Black and gold lacquer on wood
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

4. **Unknown Japanese**
Gold Lacquer Writing Box with Cranes, early 19th century
Edo Period (1615-1868)
Maki-e gold and lacquer on wood
1 1/2 x 8 3/4 x 8 1/4 inches (3.81 x 22.23 x 20.96 cm)
Fairfield University Art Museum; Partial Gift of Erik Thomsen Gallery and 2016 Museum Patron's Circle Purchase (2016.23.1)

5. **Tada Chuun 多田忠雲** (b. 1959)
Tea Caddy with Silver Dew Droplets, 1980s
Shōwa era (1926-1989)
Maki-e gold and lacquer on wood
2 1/2 x 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 inches (6.9 x 6.7 x 6.7 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

6. **Wakashima Ryōhei III 若島量平** (d. 1986)
Tea Caddy with Plum Blossoms, 1970s
Shōwa era (1926-1989)
Maki-e gold lacquer on wood
2 3/4 x 2 3/4 x 2 3/4 inches (7.5 x 7.3 x 7.3 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

7. **Takeuchi Kōsai 竹内幸斎** (b. 1944)
Tea Caddy with Maple Leaves, 1980s
Shōwa era (1926-1989)
Maki-e gold lacquer on wood
2 3/4 x 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 inches (7 x 6.7 x 6.7 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

8. **Unknown Japanese**
Trousseau Box, mid-to-late 17th century
Edo period (1615-1868)
Black lacquer ground on wood with decoration in gold and colored Kōdaiji *maki-e*, *nashiji*, gilt metal ring-fittings, and pewter rims
8 7/16 x 13 3/16 x 10 3/8 inches (21.5 x 33.5 x 26.4 cm)
Yale University Art Gallery; Gift of Peggy and Richard M. Danziger, LL.B. 1963, 2001.80.1

9. **Ichinaka Goryō 市中五稜** (active 20th century)
Portable Tea Set with Snow, Moon, and Flowers, 1990s
Heisei era (1989-2019)
Maki-e gold lacquer on wood
5 1/4 x 8 1/4 x 5 1/2 inches (13.5 x 21.3 x 14.6 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

10. **Okada Yoshio 岡田嘉夫** (b. 1977)
"Figured Patterns" Dried-Lacquer Tray with Sprinkled Design, 2016
Heisei era (1989-2019)
Kanshitsu lacquer body with black-lacquer ground; *maki-e*, *hirame* and inlay decoration
1/2 x 11 3/4 x 5 3/4 inches (1.6 x 29.7 x 14.9 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

11. Okada Yoshio 岡田嘉夫 (b. 1977)
Box with Full Moon Above the Clouds, 2016
Heisei era (1989-2019)
Togidashi maki-e kanshitsu box with gold foil moon
1¼ x 5¾ x 4¼ inches
(3.8 x 15.2 x 10.7 cm)
On loan from Erik and Cornelia Thomsen

12. Hasegawa Gyokujun 長谷川玉純 (1863-1921)
The Eight Views of Ōmi, ca. 1910
Meiji era (1868-1912)
Eight-panel folding screen
Ink, ink wash, and light color on silk
49¼ x 88¼ inches (125 x 224.5 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

13. Unknown Japanese
Inkstone Box (Suzuribako) with Eight Views of Ōmi (Ōmi-hakkei)
Mid-to-late Edo period (1615-1868)
Wood coated with lacquer and gold, with silk covering
1⅝ × 8⅞ × 9½ inches
(4.1 × 22.5 × 24.1 cm)
Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center; Purchase, Pratt Fund, 2008.21

14. Unknown Japanese
Writing Box with Horse and Rider, 18th century
Edo period (1615-1868)
Gold and black lacquer on wood with shell and pewter inlays
1¾ x 9½ x 8¾ inches
(4.6 x 24.5 x 22.3 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

15. Unknown Japanese
Writing Box with Genji Scene, 18th century
Edo period (1615-1868)
Maki-e gold lacquer on wood
1¾ x 9¼ x 8¼ inches
(4.6 x 23.5 x 21.4 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

16. Unknown Japanese
Set of Writing Box and Document Box with Poem Cards, ca. 1900
Meiji era (1868-1912)
Maki-e gold lacquer on wood
Writing box: 2 x 9¾ x 9 inches
(4.8 x 24.5 x 22.6 cm);
Document box: 6½ x 15½ x 12 inches
(16.3 x 39.6 x 30.4 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

17. Unknown Japanese
Inrō with Tale of Genji Motifs, mid-19th century
Edo period (1615-1868)
Maki-e gold lacquer on wood
3¾ x 2¼ inches (9.8 x 5.2 cm)
On loan from Erik and Cornelia Thomsen

18. Zōhiko Studio
Set of Miniature Boxes for Square and Rectangular Poem Paper, ca. 1915-1930
Taishō-early Shōwa eras
Maki-e gold lacquer on wood
Shikishi (square-paper) box:
2 × 1¾ × ½ inches (5.2 × 4.5 × 1.2 cm)
Tanzaku (rectangular-paper) box:
3 × ¾ × ½ inches (7.9 × 1.9 × 1.2 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

19. Unknown Japanese
Box with Design of Books on a Simulated Wood-Grain Surface, ca. 1890
Meiji period (1868-1912)
Maki-e gold lacquer on wood
2¼ x 4¾ x 3¾ inches
(6.1 x 12.2 x 9.5 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

20. Zōhiko Studio
Spring and Autumn Tea Caddy, 1910s
Taishō era (1912-1926)
Maki-e gold lacquer on wood
Hiramakie, takamakie, togidashi makie, kirigane inlays
2½ x 2½ x 2½ inches
(6.8 x 6.7 x 6.7 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

21. Unknown Japanese
Writing Box with Chrysanthemum and Plume Grass, 1910s
Taishō era (1912-1926)
Maki-e gold lacquer on wood with silver rims
Hiramakie, takamakie, kirigane inlays, and gold pins
3¼ x 9¼ x 5¼ inches
(8.5 x 23 x 13 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

22. Unknown Japanese
Writing Box with Fans and Flowering Plants, ca. 1900
Meiji era (1868-1912)
Maki-e gold lacquer on wood
4½ x 9¾ x 6¼ inches
(11.5 x 25.3 x 15.8 cm)
On loan from Mr. & Mrs. Berenson

23. Maehata Gahō 前端 雅峯 (b. 1936)
Tea Caddy with Floating Fans, 1980s
Shōwa era (1926-1989)
Maki-e gold lacquer on wood with shell inlays
2¼ x 3¼ x 3¼ inches
(6.2 x 8.5 x 8.5 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

24. Okada Yūji 岡田雄志 (b. 1948)
Lacquer Production Steps, 2011
Heisei era (1989-2019)
Natural lacquer on wood
34¾ inches x 3 inches (88.3 x 7.6 cm)
Private Collection, courtesy of Erik Thomsen

25. Unknown Japanese
Saga Natsume Tea Caddy with Weeping Cherry Motif
Shōwa era (1926-1989)
Lacquer on wood
2⅓ x 2⅓ x 2⅓ inches (6 x 6 x 6 cm)
On loan from Setsuko and Michael Cooney

26. Ōe Ryōki 大江良起 (b. 1874-unknown)
Kinkakuji
Taishō (1912-1926) or early Shōwa era (1926-1989)
Hanging scroll, ink and slight color on silk
78½ x 29 inches (199.5 x 74 cm)
On loan from Ronald M. Davidson

Exhibition Programs

Thursday, January 16, 5 p.m.
Opening Lecture: *Gifts of Gold: The Art of Japanese Lacquer Boxes*
Ive Covaci, PhD, Curator of the Exhibition
Bellarmine Hall, Diffley Board Room

Thursday, January 16, 6-7:30 p.m.
Opening Reception: *Gifts of Gold: The Art of Japanese Lacquer Boxes*
Bellarmine Hall, Bellarmine Hall Galleries and Great Hall

Monday, February 10, 3:30-5 p.m.
Special Event: *Japanese Tea Ceremony*
Bellarmine Hall, Diffley Board Room

Saturday, March 21, 1-4 p.m.
(2 sessions)
Family Day: *Art of Japan*
Bellarmine Hall, SmART Classroom

Tuesday, March 24, 5 p.m.
Gallery Talk: *Lacquerware and Textiles: Materials and Motifs in Japanese Art*
With Ive Covaci, PhD
Bellarmine Hall, Bellarmine Hall Galleries

Thursday, April 8, 5 p.m.
Lecture: *Sprinkled Gold and Inlaid Mother-of-Pearl: The Splendor of Japanese Lacquer**
Monika Bincsik, Diane and Arthur Abbey Assistant Curator of Japanese Decorative Arts, Metropolitan Museum of Art
Bellarmine Hall, Diffley Board Room

* *Part of the Edwin L. Weisl, Jr. Lectureships in Art History, funded by the Robert Lehman Foundation*

All events are free and open to the public, but advance registration is required.

Register at ***fuam.eventbrite.com***

For more information visit our website at ***fairfield.edu/museum***

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Connecticut Art Trail

Cover image: Unknown Japanese, *Gold Lacquer Writing Box with Cranes*, early 19th century, *maki-e* gold and lacquer on wood. Fairfield University Art Museum; Partial Gift of Erik Thomsen Gallery and 2016 Museum Patron's Circle Purchase (2016.23.1)

Back cover image: Unknown Japanese, *Writing Box with Fans and Flowering Plants*, ca. 1900, *maki-e* gold and lacquer on wood. On loan from Mr. & Mrs. Berenson

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